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WEST BANK/GAZA

COMPETE PROJECT

Strengthening the competitiveness and export potential of key sectors essential to the future prosperity of the Palestinian economy

Weekly report:
Aug 26 - Aug 30

Submitted by DAI to U.S. Agency for International Development
West Bank Gaza
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AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR

ACTIVITIES & PROJECT INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

OLIVE AND OLIVE OIL ROLLOUT

Compete aims to strengthen the West Bank Olive Oil sector by introducing new, simple production technology through lead farmers with the end result of increased productivity. This week in Nablus, Compete and PCARD (Palestinian Centre for Agricultural Research and Development) met with select farmers taking part in this year's program, which will take place under the supervision of Mr. Fares Al Jabi, Agribusiness Specialist with over 35 years experience in the olive sector. The meeting provided a forum for farmers to ask Mr. Jabi questions about the program, which will be implemented across 60 sites in the West Bank. The rollout is expected to result in a ~250% increase in oil production over traditional practices.



Members of the Olive Oil Rollout, Nablus

FRESH HERBS ASSOCIATION BUILDING

This week marked a major milestone in Compete's efforts to build an association in the fractured Fresh Herbs industry. After various meetings, workshops and conversations to help the industry realize the benefits of association building, the industry has reached agreement on the creation of a Palestinian Fresh Herbs private non-profit company, comprised of the 20 major industry stakeholders.

The current status of the Fresh Herb sector is disparate. Compete's objective has been to promote the benefit of a unified voice to satisfy international market requirements and standards. With the assistance of a legal team, Compete has organized several workshops with Fresh Herbs stakeholders to determinate the best legal identity benefiting all members. By unanimous decision, 7 of the 20 stakeholders were selected to build the non-profit company frame, which should come to fruition in the next few weeks.

Intermediate result contributed to: Linking Local Value Chain to International Value Chain

Milestones:

- ✓ Attained consensus on Fresh Herbs private non-profit company to organize the sector

WASTE WATER STUDY TOUR TO JORDAN

In anticipation of the March 2013 water treatment plant opening in Nablus West, Compete is bringing awareness to local farmers on the importance and economic benefits of using reclaimed wastewater for crop irrigation. Presently, farmers in the region show low enthusiasm for this method. Partnering with the Palestinian MOA and the Jordanian MOA, Compete has coordinated a Study Tour to Jordan where this practice is well established among farmers.

The Study Tour runs from September 1st - 4th and will cover various Jordanian sites, and include workshops. Participants will include 19 farmers from Dier Sharaf and Sabastiya, Compete agribusiness team and members of the MOA.

Intermediate result contributed to: # of Palestinian Products & Services Meeting International Standards or Specifications



Agribusiness team at the Ministry of Agriculture discussing the Jordan study tour, Nablus

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK:

- Study Tour to Jordan (September 1-5) with Palestinian MOA/Farmers to visit wastewater treatment in Jordan to be replicated in the West Bank
- Final preparations for World Food Fair in Moscow (Sept 17-20)
- Finalize Year 2 Work-plan with proposed activities and rollout of current activities

TOURISM SECTOR
ACTIVITIES & PROJECT INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

HOTEL CLASSIFICATION (HC)

The first official meeting of the Palestinian Hotel Classification Joint Committee took place this week in Ramallah, following the official establishment of the committee by the Ministry of Tourism (MOTA). During the meeting, the general terms of reference for the Committee were approved, and the General Director of the Tourism Professions Department at MOTA and the AHA (Arab Hotel Association) Director were named as chairperson and secretary, respectively. Based on the detailed ToR, the roles of the Chairperson, Secretary and the committee will be empowered under the existing tourism law.

MOTA is taking steps to add new departments in their organizational chart: specifically, one for Hotel Classification and another for tourism curriculum. Further, based on discussions in previous committee meetings, MOTA is now redrafting its tourism law and licensing instructions in order to include the AHA membership as a prerequisite for hotel licensing. Committee members agreed that the Joint Committee will manage the end-to-end Classification process, including an inspection and assessment by teams of three people made up of one public and two private sector representatives; this is considered a best practice for inspection. Additional outcomes from the meeting include:

- Established dates for the recruiting, testing, and training assessors, which are expected to take place in the first half of November
- Review of the first section of the Hotel Classification Quality proposed Standards and criteria. September 5th was set as the date for final review, at the next Joint Committee meeting.
- A timetable was developed to put tasks into a clearer, more attainable time frame. Tasks include the assessors' recruitment, meetings, launch date, in addition to the creation of a final standards and operational manual.

On August 29th Compete issued a press release promoting the success of the public-private sector partnership in the Hotel Classification activity. The joint committee serves as a positive and constructive model for Palestinian private-public partnership going forward. Media coverage to date includes:

<http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=137542>

<http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/380897>

<http://www.alhayat-j.com/newsite/newspaper/index.php>

<http://www.al-ayyam.com/pdfs/30-8-2012/p25.pdf>

Intermediate result contributed to: Linking Local Value Chain to International Value Chain



Members of the Hotel Classification Joint Committee meeting, City Inn Palace, Ramallah

Milestones:

- ✓ Official TOR for Hotel Classification Committee approved
- ✓ Hotel Classification Chairperson and Secretary formally approved
- ✓ Agreement that the Joint Committee will manage the Classification process
- ✓ First section of the proposed Hotel Classification Quality Standards agreed

HOSPITALITY SCHOOL ACTIVITY

This week the draft Hospitality School implementation plan was finalized and is now under review. Moving forward, the Compete Tourism team, along with an engineering consultant will continue efforts to identify the physical area and facilities required to meet the proposed needs of the hospitality school.

Intermediate result contributed to: Categories for Skilled Workforce to Increase Demand

Milestones:

- ✓ Draft Hospitality School Implementation Plan finalized

SITE RENOVATION AND REHABILITATION

At the 2nd meeting of the Site Renovation Taskforce this week, members discussed quick impact interventions for the five selected sites (Bethany, Birqin Church, Hisham's Palace, Sabastiya and Taybeh Town.) The taskforce is currently finalizing the SOWs and RFPs for the five sites.

Concurrently, in preparation for the next round of interventions on the five sites, the taskforce is planning community involvements. This involves defining partners, stakeholders and local action groups to ensure a long-term, sustainable approach to site renovation and rehabilitation.

Intermediate result contributed to: # of Palestinian Products & Services Meeting International Standards or Specifications

Milestones:

- ✓ Site records finalized (location, history, significance, ownership, project plans, etc.)
- ✓ TOR for the Site Management Task Force between MOTA/DACH and Compete prepared and finalized



Site Renovation Meeting, Bethlehem

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK:

- Preparations for the Year 2 work-plan
- Preparations for the Digital Tourism event

ICT SECTOR
ACTIVITIES & PROJECT INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

HI-TECH HUB EVENT

The HI-TECH HUB event has been designed as a monthly gathering of developers, web designers, entrepreneurs, students, academics, investors and others interested in contributing to a more vibrant start-up community in the West Bank. Compete has established a steering committee of key IT stakeholders, including PICTI (Palestine Information & Communications Technology Incubator) and University Excellence Centers that will eventually own and plan future HI-TECH HUB events.

The committee has also been tasked with selecting ten startup projects that will present their IT startup ideas at the event. There will be an area for presenters to display their projects and each will have approximately 2 minutes to present their ideas. Attendees will later vote for the best idea; three winners will be announced at the end. Prizes are still under consideration but may include an internship at an international company.

The September 12th event will feature three international speakers with Palestinian origins to speak about their success and interact with attendees:

- **Sami Shalabi** is a Boston based software inventor, entrepreneur, and angel investor. He is currently head Engineer for Google's Digital Publishing Platform, where he co-founded Google Currents, Google Producer, and Google Friend Connect. Mr. Shalabi joined Google after they acquired Zingku Inc, a software company he co-founded in 2006. Mr. Shalabi has over 60 patent/patent pending ideas and MIT recognized Sami with the 2009 MIT ASO Young Professional Award. In 2009, Mr. Shalabi co-founded YallaStartup, a non-profit with the mission of fostering innovation and early stage entrepreneurship in the MENA region.
- **Wael Manasra** is the Founder/CEO of Voice Beam. Mr. Manasra launched ChitChat Communications, focusing on the hyper-competitive international calling market. His startup was accepted to Northwestern University's IT Incubator program, where he grew his \$14,000 USD initial seed investment into a \$2M/year business in 36 months.
- Ayman Irshaid: Founder/CEO Areeba Areeba (BIO PENDING)

Milestones:

- ✓ Brought together key stakeholders of the IT community to form a steering committee

Intermediate result contributed to: Categories for Skilled Workforce to Increase Demand

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK:

- Launch of PR and Media Campaign
- Media outreach activities will continue

STONE & MARBLE SECTOR ACTIVITIES & PROJECT INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

PREPARATIONS FOR THE YEAR 2 WORKPLAN

The Year 2 work-plan “wish-list” was outlined this week, detailing Stone & Marble sector activities for consideration by USAID. Planning also included a meeting with a group marketing company to discuss future activities.

USAID MEETING, AUGUST 31, 2012

Compete Stone & Marble team prepared and delivered a presentation to USAID in Hebron this week, focusing on sector issues, such as sludge, new product development and cross-sector implementation.

TRADE SHOW PREPARATIONS

This week the team finalized plans for booth design, sample types and logistics for the upcoming [Maromacc](#) International Exhibition of Stone Design and Technology, which takes place September 25-29 in Verona and the [Dubai Big 5](#) International Building & Construction Show (Nov 5-8).

Intermediate result contributed to: Linking Local Value Chain to International Value Chain

Milestones:

- ✓ Prepared Filter Press Implementation scheme, including pricing quotes

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK:

- Continued work on Year 2 Work-plan
- Begin vetting vendors for Filter Presses
- Preparations for the follow-up CIBER workshop
- Continued preparations for trade shows

CALENDAR OF EVENTS – SEPTEMBER 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri	Sat
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Waste Water reuse Study Tour, Jordan	Waste Water reuse Study Tour, Jordan	Waste Water reuse Study Tour, Jordan	Waste Water reuse Study Tour, Jordan			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
			HI-TECH HUB EVENT, Movenpick, Ramallah, CIBER Workshop, Hebron (TBC)			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Oracle Training Launch (TBC)	World Food Fair, Moscow	World Food Fair, Moscow	World Food Fair, Moscow	World Food Fair, Moscow		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
		Maromacc Trade Show, Verona	Maromacc Trade Show, Verona	Maromacc Trade Show, Verona		